An Essay

on

Similia Similibus curantur.

Respectfully Submitted

To the Faculty of the

Homoeopathic Medical College

Of Pennsylvania

on the

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One thousand, eight hundred, and fifty three

By

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This age is one of research and investigation. The hidden arcana of nature are being opened to the vision of man, and their treasures brought from the original resting place as helps to his happiness. Countries with barren plains of cheerless aspect and rugged mountains with rocky sides, formerly unknown and traversed only by wild animals, or untutored man and lonely travellers, now yield stores of value to mankind. Man's inventive and searching mind seeks in every object some useful property. The vaporization of water places an agent in his power, to be used as a machine to save the labor of his fellow man, or to be sent to and fro as he chooseth as an instrument capable of excelling all living animals in speed and strength. The invisible and imponderable forces are subservient to his will; the same element as the fierce and forked lightning, brought as it were from the clouds, is curbed by the hand of man, and made

to traverse our country in a moment of time, the post-boy of the world. Galvanic is useful for many purposes, and the scientific world is now agitated with the experiment of using it to propel vessels upon the waters, and thus facilitate the social intercourse among the inhabitants of the world. The products of earth, air, and water are analyzed and examined for man's benefit. The arts and sciences are becoming more developed, and useful; and in this "age of steam" medicine has also partaken of the spirit, has come from its dark domain, and is endeavoring to establish from many facts, a more certain and safe guide, the great law of similia similibus curantur.

There is necessity for some better plan of treating disease, than the old one - it was destructive as disease; and although it had existed for ages, it was for want of a better. During the middle ages, the world was enveloped in moral and intellectual darkness. All

branches of literature and science were unprogressive, and but few leaves of ancient lore were found scattered over the known world. A few seats of learning and truth had been established to point out the way, and no genial rays of wisdom shone upon the mind of man to enlighten him. The highway to learning was obstructed and the pursuit for knowledge was vague and difficult from the surrounding darkness and opposition of those in authority. Mankind were ignorant, superstitious, and bigoted. For many centuries medicine had made very little progress. Rome, which had been queen of the world and the seat of learning, gradually sank in luxury, indolence and vice until destruction came over the seven-hilled city - and its power, pride and learning departed. The northern barbarians, who had taken the city were ignorant and unpolished, and their medical knowledge corresponded to their advancement. When the Arabians introduced their manner

of treating disease, which was more successful, their doctrines were generally received. After the Turks took possession of Constantinople, many Grecian physicians fled over into Italy and introduced their system which had come down from Hippocrates and Galen and was found to be similar to the Arabians, and on farther examination to be the great fountain head of that Physic, as the Arabians had received their principal ideas of medicine from Greece. It was somewhat different, for the Arabians new remedies had been discovered in Arabia, and many therefore clung to what they had first received, and were called Chemists - the others from their founder were called Galenists. Both sects had strong and energetic adherents; the Galenists were more popular in France, England and some other countries, and were mild in their administration of remedies in comparison with the Chemists, who were bold and experimental, and used powerful drugs in massive doses. These

modes of practice however were both empirical, being founded on experience alone, which varied in its teaching to them every few years. Without any great law, both Sect changed from article to article, not knowing the cause of cure, but trusting to chance for success, and thus remained in a progressive.

Printing, that mighty agent of man's mind, was invented, and Wisdom came forth from her retreat, Like the morning sun rising from behind the hills, and peering through the dark clouds among which it had been secluded, it shot forth its genial rays through the quiet valleys, and into many a rural hamlet whose occupants had their ideas bounded compassed by the rugged mountains, which girt their native home. Science then went forward with speed, for from various parts of the world, resource came for the advancement. The mind of man was being prepared to attain unto greater heights, but the road was uncertain and dark. In place of the

Philosophy of the ancients; which led into mysticism and error, Sir Francis Bacon established a new Philosophy, and proclaimed that all Knowledge should be gained by Induction. Facts should be sought for and examined and new Truths be derived for the benefit of Man; and those things which did not tend to make him more comfortable and happy were unworthy Experiment and Labor. "Utilitas est Philosophia vera" was his precept. The world felt the impulse; facts upon facts were accumulated, Experiments were tried until truths more comprehensive and grand burst upon the enraptured mental vision of men — truths as compasses to guide them across the stormy sea of life. The tendency of all Knowledge is from many particular facts to form general truths; and from every clime the offerings came, like streams from a mountain side, to form a greater that may be used in rendering man elevated and happy.

But where was Medicine in the meantime?

Was it also hastening to the goal of perfection to be more useful to mankind? No, it still lingered among the purges, venesection and other life destroying operations of former days. Blindly they stood with the bright lights twinkling around, but could not see the true way, and hence made no advancement. There was need of some change, such an empirical practice would not agree with the spirit of progress, that was then in the world. While the arts and sciences arose by adopting the Baconian Philosophy, medicine remained almost stationary. There was no great law or principle then known to the medical profession which might be followed. They made some endeavors, but the chains of habit rested too strongly upon them, and they could not arise from their thraldom. There was no general truth as a star to guide them where health and strength were born, but innumerable receipts, like foot paths through a forest, led them wandering about through many dangers, or by chance find the true road and a safe resting

place. There were attempts to rest medicine on a more solid basis, and many theories were originated. Cullen, by his doctrines of "vis medicatrix naturae", thought to reform the practice, and was well received. Brown had his followers, and Broussais' Physiological doctrine up to the present time is popular among many admirers. They are all too much circumscribed in their ability for usefulness, and medicine, under their teachings would not keep pace with the advance of the world; and such was the state of medical knowledge, that Dugald Stewart states in his work, it seems impossible to classify the practice of medicine under general principles. He looked at the condition and progress of the Profession and did not know or examines into its capabilities of being brought under general principles.

A new era has commenced, and under more favorable auspices medicine is competing with other branches of learning in this "age of steam". In 1790, Samuel-

Hahnemann, whilst translating "Cullen's Materia Medica", and upon the cinchona bark, became desirous of ascertaining its mode of action. "Whilst in the enjoyment of the most robust health, he commenced the use of this substance, and in a short time was attacked with the symptoms of intermittent fever, similar in every respect to those which that medicine is known to cure. Being struck with the identity of the two diseases, he immediately divined the great truth which has become the foundation of the new medical doctrine of Homoeopathy". He obtained other drugs, and experimented upon himself and others, and when he met with diseases that had similar action, he administered that medicine, and discovered similia similibus curantur was a true theory, that a medicine must be given that will produce on a healthy person, symptoms similar to the disease. He commenced practice, and although strongly opposed by preju-

dice and bigotry, but he was more powerful and he succeeded most admirably. As in all reforms, the strongest opposition was from members of his profession; his theory conflicted with too many of their ideas, and to yield their opinions would be derogatory from their judgements. It seems a prevalent error among men, that doctrines which have once been imbibed are adhered to with a degree of bigotry, that opposes every attempt towards innovation and improvement.

The false light that has led the medical world astray for so many centuries, has been their search for the cause of disease. When, in ancient times, Plato and Aristotle led the literary world, metaphysics were the chief object of study; they loved to revel in imagination, framing fanciful theories concerning men and the world, and medicine partook of the spirit of the times. During the middle ages, the schoolmen insinuated their manner of reasoning, and the medical profession was led into the

same wild search for the cause of disease, and arrived at many strange conclusions. Notwithstanding the investigation it remains unrevealed, and ever will be so long as the knowledge of internal action is limited to external manifestations. It is one of the many mysteries, which the Creator of the Universe has not revealed to man. By observation, we know there is a power within man which excites all the varied and wonderful motions. There is a vital principle, which when in full activity and power, induces strength and harmony of action in the body, directs the movement of the numerous and delicate machinery, and gives that pleasing appearance in man called life. But let death or the want of that vital principle be present, and what becomes of him. He can no longer sustain the erect position, there is no life or brightness in his eye, his countenance is rigid and unexpressive, he is cold and motionless as the polished marble. There is no expansion of the lungs to receive the air containing

oxygen, that will change and heat the blood until its expansive power propels it into the heart and arteries. The poisonous breath of miasm has no effect, no cutting instrument produces pain, inflammation and gangrene. The derangement of the body therefore depends upon the vital principle, and upon that must the physician employ his energies and skill to regulate. It is a spiritual dynamic force, the archy of Paracelsus, which in a tranquil and unoppressed state produces a unity of action among the organs, and makes existence a pleasure to man, but when disease assails, it affects that principal, causes it to act on the body and produce disorder and pain; and at last when the vital principle departs, the disease acts no more, the organism, like machinery without steam, remains motionless.

Physicians for ages past, in seeking for the cause of disease have become so absorbed in the pursuit, and by acting on the effects, they now call

them the causi morbi, and the disease. They imagine the morbid material which accumulates is the cause, and endeavor to remove it by purging, blisters, bleeding and other violent mechanical measures. They endeavor to imitate nature, which either forces it away or produces injury in another part. But nature is unintelligent in her operations, she cannot close the gaping wound, or adjust the edges so nicely together as when man lends his aid. In disease, it does not always taken the shortest method of removing the offending cause, but by violent measures weakens the body in removing fluids or producing metastasis to more important organs. Homoeopathy recommends a broader basis to develop the energies of medicine, a general law to guide the practitioner, is proven to be true from many facts and experiments. The vital principle must be operated on and brought to an equilibrium, and the organism returns to its normal state of action. Since the cause of disease cannot be known, the effects must be sufficient to guide the Physician, and to remove the symptoms, is therefore all that is re-

necessary, for when the sufferings are gone the disease is cured. The symptoms, which arise from a change in the vital principle producing abnormal effects are the only indications of the disease, and the question would arise how can the vital principle be influenced to remove the totality of the symptoms, and thus remove the disease. And, as there is nothing discoverable in disease by which anything further can be known in regard to the nature of the medicine that should be employed, the totality of the symptoms, are sufficient indications. Therefore instead of regarding one symptom only as the disease, and choosing the remedy to overcome that, the ensemble of the symptoms should be taken as the guide in selecting a medicine, and causing a speedy cure.

Disease is a change in the state of the system, and remedies to rectify it, must have effect also upon the vital principle. Their action cannot be known by acquaintance with their external character

or their chemical composition; nor can their true action be known from a mere effort of the mind, or by observing their effects when administered to a person diseased. In disease the vital principle is in an abnormal state, and strong and massive doses of medicine given at that times, will have different effects from their action on a healthy person. - Often, in disease, they give no visible manifestations of their action, but are permitted to rest undisturbed by the vital principle which is overcome and unresisting by the combined action of disease and drug; but the same drugs, when administered to one in health, would have produced most serious consequences, for the vital power having nothing but the medicinal disease to contend with, is aroused and excited to increased action. It is therefore evident to every thoughtful and reasonable person, that the true action of a medicine will be known more correctly, when the vital principle is in equilibrium in a healthy person; the part of the organism which is primarily affected and the

extent of the drug's influence will be observed. Two medicines should not be given at the same time, for since they influence the vital power to change the abnormal condition of the body, one would withdraw the a part of the energies of that power to another part of the system, thus dividing its strength and preventing the speedy determination of the disease. In experimenting on their effects upon healthy persons, it would be impossible to know which part of the animal frame would be affected by each medicine, for two medicines would produce different changes on different parts, and it is reasonable to suppose that one at the same time should be given to derive its full strength and benefit.— That a medicine which produces on a healthy person symptoms similar to those of the disease, should be chosen as a remedy, was discovered by Hahnemann from facts and experiments proven to be true, and by perience, the Mentor of Mankind justified the conclusion. Why they do act according to similia similibus curantur, is yet beyond the compass of mans intellectual domain. It is

a law of Nature which has been discovered from its effects, and we need no more knowledge in reference to why it is so, than we do of other mysteries of which men make use, otherwise do not reject because they cannot understand. It is sufficient if there is enough evidence to testify that a law exists, and experience confirms. Thus it is with the Homoeopathic doctrine. facts every day declare, that when the ensemble of the symptoms are taken, and a medicine obtained that most nearly resembles in its action the symptoms of the disease, and then given, the symptoms will vanish, and reason would therefore that direct one to consider the doctrine true.

The principal aim of the physician is to remove the disease in the quickest, safest and most lasting manner. Let the practice of the Old School be observed by an intelligent person and its errors will be seen. They propose to imitate the vital power, which like a stream of water undisturbed flows gently and calmly in its course, but when disturbed by opposition, it rises and endeavors to force its way

or finally seeks some other outlet. The vital power, in disease, exerts its strength to repel the invader, and by its increased action cures of strengthening articles, or by finding some other outlet produces injury in different organs. That nature herself is not able to recover her strength and tranquility in the quickest manner may be seen when disease attacks the uncultivated and barbarous. Then to imitate her operations by more violent operations or counter irritation would not be wise, in endeavoring to shorten the action of disease, but would rather require a longer period. In Homoeopathic practice, the remedy by its specific action is applied immediately to the diseased part, and no other part is affected. No injury is produced by the medicine, no over excitation is present to delay the action or recovery, but the vital powers return to their natural strength and the body to its harmony of action. thus requiring less time than in the old school practice, is necessary.

The allopathic practice is also not so safe.

They have no regular law by which they administer medicines. There are innumerable receipts which have been recommended by others, but not knowing the true action of the remedy, they are compelled to indulge in conjecture, or to have two or three medicines, which are given in all diseases. Most drugs are powerful in their actions, and when given in large doses certainly cause injury to the body. Who that has carefully examined the human structure and proceeded studiously through the labyrinths of bones, muscles, and various organs, and has not reflected that there must be a ruling power to direct, has not wondered at the delicateness of the structure, how the various parts are so slightly yet nicely linked together, and still amid all violent system the harmony of action is preserved, would he not conclude that drugs which act so powerfully and mechanically are injurious to the sensitive and delicate structure. When taken by healthy persons, the system is so soon afflicted with weakness and pain, how much more readily would injury be produced upon one who is already weakened by disease. In homoeopathic practice there is a general law to

direct the practitioner. Similia similibus curantur is his watch word, no medicine can be used that does not respond. The remedy acts upon the vital power, and reason and observation have shown that small doses only are necessary, being directed to a particular part of the body by its specific action, no other region of the system will be affected, but the vital power and organism will gently return to its accustomed harmony.

In old school practice recovery slowly takes place, and troublesome sequelae often remain. There are many who can testify from painful experience of the strong and lasting action of medicines taken many years ago. In homoeopathic mode of treating disease, there is no overexcitement of the vital power, no tampering with the organic functions, no weakening of the system by the removal of fluids or counter irritation by mechanical operations, but the vital power directed and aided to be again brought into healthy action.

There are objections to the doctrines of Similia Similibus Curantur as there are to all new reforms. Some contend that

it recommends what will make sick will make well. This would be more properly called a misrepresentation originated by opposers and prejudiced persons, instead of carefully and candidly seeking for the truth. In disease, the same thing is not given, as measles for measles — which is more like their doctrine for they always make worse before they kill or cure — but a medicine is administered which has similar action. The right and left hand are similar, but are not the same. so in Physic the disease and remedy are similar, but not the same. A medicine that has an action similar to the disease directs and aids the vital power in the same manner and upon the same part of the organism, and then produces the change which experience has shown to be the quickest, safest and most lasting. The infinitesimal dose is a great stumbling block to others, who have not tested its truth. This however is not one of the pillars of homoeopathy, it is the ornament which has been formed by skillful hands, and to refuse the high attenuation would not be a disavowal of the

homoeopathic practice, but would be a lessening of his success and ability. For so many years have men been drugged with numerous nauseating articles and weakening substances, have known that it was the custom of their ancestors, that they have become so firmly established, it is almost as difficult to cease from their practice, as it was for the Brahmin of the East, who held his arm horizontally, as a punishment, for so many years, that he was unable at last to bring it to its natural position. It is difficult to break off from old customs, and many of the sick think no good is being done, unless they feel the gripings and unusual operation of drugs, and their weakening influence. The spiritual vital principle is influenced by the spiritual dynamic force of the remedy. Unbelievers have not tried the method, and therefore do not recognize its truth, but let the infinitesimal specific be given in a case of disease, and health will return. To the prejudiced and ignorant all may seem mysterious, and by them is therefore ridiculed, but when a careful

do at this time corroborate the truth of his opinions. And now in this "age of Progress", when all the arts and sciences are tending to elevate and perfect mankind, medicine under the banner of "Similia Similibus Curantur" has come forward to take her rank in the literary world. From innumerable data which had accumulated as rugged ore and made medicine a learned Profession, Hahnemann has drawn out, as by refining fire, a great and noble science; in lieu the teachings of reason and experience he has brought out of Chaos and Confusion, a science under rule and order, which shows to all candid searchers and investigators for Truth, that Similia Similibus Curantur is a great and true law of Nature.